



WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. of L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

No. 5.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

CONSPIRACY IS MANIFEST

To Crush Ironworkers International Union by Fastening Crime Upon It.

UNIONISTS THOROUGHLY AROUSED

Accusations of Criminality Against Labor Men, Because They Are Labor Men, Are Reprehensible.

ACTION INDIANAPOLIS CONFERENCE

American Federation of Labor Executive Council Designated to Receive and Disburse All Funds for Defense.

Washington, May 6.--The entire country has been informed through the press dispatches of the arrest and kidnapping of J. J. McNamara, Secretary-Treasurer of the Iron Workers, together with his brother, and their spiriting away by detectives to Los Angeles, without having been given an opportunity to consult counsel, or defend themselves even in the most remote way. With apparent studied and prearranged manner the columns of the daily press have been carrying an unusual amount of lurid and sensational statements of what is alleged to have occurred, and predicting even worse. From these incidents, indications are apparent that a conspiracy is attempted with the end in view to destroy the Iron Workers and cast odium on organized labor in general. The sentiments permeating the news assumes that simply because the men charged are connected with the activities of union labor they must of necessity be guilty of the crime charged. With only a few notable exceptions has there been any effort to suggest that it is unjust to pre-judge; that the better method to be pursued would be to await until both sides have been heard before public decision is rendered. To build up prejudice and inflame the public mind when heinous crimes have been charged against the accused is not in accord with the spirit of American institutions.

The officials of the American Federation of Labor have always been foremost in inveighing against even the slightest infraction of the law, and the rank and file of its membership are in entire harmony with this procedure. Times without number have the men of labor, although entirely innocent, been called upon by unfair, unprincipled and

illegal combinations of wealth, to defend themselves against the machinations of unscrupulous men. And as often has the bath of fire proved the fallacious and unserviceable texture of the web woven to enmesh them.

Whenever a crime is committed, no matter by whom, whether it be a member of a union or not, after the accused has been tried by a fair and unbiased tribunal, if found guilty punishment should be inflicted. Organized labor asks no immunities from the law, neither is it entitled to any. Labor does not desire government to assist it in any way, other than that conferred on all citizens, but it does demand that it be permitted, in common with all others to work out its destiny within the law.

Immediately after the arrest and kidnapping of the accused, President Gompers and Secretary Spencer of the Building Trades Department, proceeded to Indianapolis to confer with the officials of the international unions located in that city. After a two days' conference it was advised that the executive council of the American Federation of Labor, to avoid diffusion of effort, take charge of the entire matter of receiving and disbursing funds, together with all other matters in connection with the case, so that ample opportunity for proper defense may be assured.

The men of labor believe that the men accused are innocent and they will use every effort to defend them against what they believe to be an unjust accusation. According to the concept of our institutions every man charged with crime is assumed to be innocent until he is proven guilty, and acting upon this assumption organized labor will raise sufficient funds to hire the ablest counsel that can be secured for the purpose of procuring for the accused a fair and impartial trial.

----- LLOYD BILL HEARING -----

Committee on Civil Service Reform Continue Hearings in Reference to the Railway Mail Clerks.

Washington, May 6.—The second session of the committee on Civil Service Reform (house) met and continued its hearings on the Lloyd Bill, which provides specifically that department officials shall have no right to demote, discharge or interfere with employes simply for the reason that they are members of labor organizations. Secretary Morrison of the American Federation of Labor occupied the entire morning hour in presenting a mass of evidence to show that the railway mail clerks in various parts of the country had been reduced in rank discharged and otherwise discriminated against. Nearly a full attendance of the committee was present. Second Assistant Postmaster General Stewart was also present, but upon the conclusion of Secretary Morrison's presentation the house was ready to convene and committee adjourned to meet later in the week, when further hearings will be had. Indications point to a thorough investigation into the attitude of the department in reference to the mail clerks, and it may be extended to cover the entire operation of the department.

PHYSICAL DETERIORATION

British Workmen Receding in Vitality Demonstrated by Tests by the Military Authorities.

Washington, May 6.--When President Gompers appeared before the committee on Labor (house) in opposition to the establishment of the Taylor system in the government arsenals he stated that the introduction of this scheme was without consideration of the well being of workmen; that no system should be inaugurated that did not have a due regard for the average physical ability. In illustration he made the following statement relative to the physical deterioration of British workmen in many industries, which was discovered by military officials while recruiting for service in the Boer war:

"The results were first demonstrated during the Boer War, that is, it was first demonstrated in that war in recent years, although it had been demonstrated before that time. In that war, when the Britons were appealed to to enlist in the war the measurements taken by the representatives of the military authorities showed a diminution in the stature of the British workmen in many industries. Their chest measurements, their height and weight were found to be entirely disproportionate and they had deteriorated."

BEARING FRUIT

Labor's Effort to Establish Six-Day Week for Workmen Wins Influence on Steel Trust.

Washington, May 6.--Although the efforts of organized labor is deprecated in many quarters, yet it is significant that constant changes are taking place in the industrial world in the direction and in conformity with the views promulgated by organized workmen. The steel trust, the inveterate and persistent enemy of union workmen, is now actively engaged in following out one of the primal principles of union labor that workmen should be permitted to rest one day in seven. At Sharon, Pa., it is reported that "six days only" for all laboring men is the mandate which was posted in the south works of the Carnegie Steel Company. The blast furnace does not close down on Sunday and the company will employ extra men, as also will be the case in other departments running continuously. The order further specifies that if "a man is one of those who is assigned to Sunday work he must lay off some other day of the week."

LABOR COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Taylor System Up Before Committee on Resolution for Investigation--
Three Sessions Held.

Washington, May 6.--The Labor Committee of the House of Representatives was called to meet in pursuance of a resolution referred to it calling for an investigation into an "efficiency" system. President Gompers, James C. O'Connell of the Machinists and N. P. Alifas, representing the workmen at the Rock Island, Ill., arsenal, appeared and made arguments against the system and in favor of a thorough investigation by the Labor Committee.

FEDERATED RAILROAD TRADES

Victimizing of Employees in Shops of Pennsylvania Lines Causes Cessation of Work on Pittsburg Division.

Washington, May 6.--" * * * Before making this reduction in force, however, we desire to have an expression from our laborers as to whether or not they are members of labor organizations, or whether it is their intention to join one of the labor organizations now being organized in this vicinity. In this reduction of force to live within our allotment it is our intention to first lay off the men who are members of the organization, or who propose to join the organization. Advise us not later than Monday P. M. the answer of your men to the question, 'Are you a member of a labor organization; if so, what? Is it your intention to join one of the labor organizations now being organized in this vicinity?' W. T. Hanley."

The above was addressed to all foremen of the Pennsylvania lines in Pennsylvania, and is the fundamental cause for 4,000 employees in the shops on the Pittsburg division leaving their employment. Since the men commenced organizing in February the company have been picking men off every day for the sole reason of their membership in labor organizations. Numerous conferences have been held between representatives of the men and the officials of the road, but the railway officials of the road, but the railway officials have stubbornly refused to give any consideration whatever to the grievances of their employees. The feeling has been growing in the minds of all the men that this action on the part of the company was arbitrary, and also believing that their turn to be discharged might come at any moment added another element of restlessness which culminated in a spontaneous decision to cease work. Added to the many arbitrary acts was a statement attributed to Superintendent Morrow, who is quoted as saying:

"That owing to the late rulings of the interstate commerce commission the company had to be very careful about handbolts and grabirons, etc., and that it was impossible for an old man to climb on the roof or under the cars and to attend closely to that work, and that consequently they had to dispose of the older employees and get younger men who were more active and better capable of performing the work satisfactorily." Some of the men laid off as too old were only 36 years of age.

Another attempt is to be made to adjust the grievances with the company, but if it fails indications point to the trouble spreading and involving the entire system.

BUTTONWORKERS' STRIKE SETTLED

Satisfactory Agreement Has Been Reached and Employees Have Been Reinstated in Old Positions.

Washington, May 6.--Telegraphic advices to the American Federation of Labor contain the news that the Buttonworkers of Muscatine, Iowa, on strike for a number of weeks, have reached an agreement with their employers, and have returned to work. The agreement includes an increase in wages and readjustment of a number of grievances relative to the weighing of the product produced by the workmen and work women. Over 1,000 were involved in the controversy.

INVESTIGATION DESIRED

House Resolution Introduced Seeks Inquiry Into Methods Employed and Work Performed by Department and Postmasters.

Washington, May 6.—A resolution has been introduced in the House of Representatives and has already reached the calendar authorizing the committee on post offices and post roads to institute and carry forward an investigation into the conduct and administration of the affairs of the Postoffice Department, and of the service under and in connection with the same, in order to ascertain whether abuses exist, either in the department or in the service. According to the resolution the committee will also be empowered to inquire as to the time devoted by the postmasters of the first and other classes to private enterprises and personal vocations. Numerous other subjects relative to the activities of postmasters is contemplated. This resolution is one of the results accruing from the department's treatment of the railway mail clerks.

SEAMEN'S BILL

Bills Introduced in Both Senate and House to Protect American Seamen and Encourage Training of Boys.

Washington, May 6.—Senator La Follette has introduced a bill to abolish the involuntary servitude imposed upon seamen in the merchant marine of the United States while in foreign ports, and also the involuntary servitude imposed upon seamen of the merchant marine of foreign countries while in the ports of the United States. It contemplates also the prevention of undermanning and unskilled manning of American vessels, and to encourage the training of boys in the American Merchant Marine, and to amend the laws relative to American Seamen.

Representative Wilson has introduced in the House a Companion Bill. Indications point to decisive action being taken during this session of Congress relative to this important matter, which has been held up for many sessions.

BETTER LAWS ASKED

Canadian Officials of Labor Active in Their Efforts to Secure More Adequate Statutes.

Washington, May 6.—A delegation representing the Quebec executive of the Trades and Labor Congress waited upon the Prime Minister of that Province recently for the purpose of asking certain amendments to the labor laws. The proposed amendments dealt with workmen's compensation, the price of school books, the improvement of sanitary conditions in factories, Sunday labor, regulation of laundries and tailoring at home. A delegation from the Ontario Executive of the Congress also waited on the premier of the Province and suggested raising the age limit for factory children to sixteen years, providing better heating for foundries and providing for the inspection of clothing.

Charles Franklin, Manager of the Philadelphia Branch of the Perkins Detective Agency, has been arrested and held in \$2,500 bail, charged with an attempt to blackmail Charles H. Strong, an Erie (Pa) millionaire. Detectives and detective agencies are all about on a par.

RECALCITRANT UNIONIST

Refused to Pay Assessment Levied by His Organization to Defray Expense for Labor Representation.

Washington, May 6.—A British trade union journal makes timely comment on Osborne, the union member who refused to pay the assessment levied by his union to defray its share toward maintaining members in Parliament, and whom it will be remembered carried the matter to the courts. Osborne's reprehensible act is condemned by the great body of unionists in Great Britain, as it should. The comment follows:

Cur "friend" and fellow trade unionist Osborne is again top dog. His executive council expelled him after offering him and a few more like him the coppers he had paid for labor representation. They also closed the branch of which he was a member. Osborne appealed. The first court said the executive council was quite within its right. The second court has reversed that decision. Now the case goes to "the lords," and meantime Osborne gets costs of the two courts below, and again he may put his tongue in his cheek till "the lords" decide. Osborne will go down to posterity as one who made strenuous efforts to strangle our new hope, the labor party, and he will appear as ridiculous to us in years to come as King Chanute waving his sceptre and commanding the rising ocean to go back.

PRINTERS' FIGHT

London Society of Compositors Establish Daily Labor Paper in Contest for Shorter Workday.

Washington, May 6.—In London the printing trades are now fighting a winning battle for a shorter workday. A new daily labor paper has been put in the field by the London Society of Compositors. The paper is intended not alone to voice the printing trades' side of the present dispute, but also to voice the wider sentiments of trade unionism generally and become a general workmen's newspaper. The paper is called the Daily Herald, and its price halfpenny daily.

CONTEMPT OF COURT

Six Bills Have Been Introduced in Lower House Providing Trial by Jury in Indirect Contempts.

Washington, May 6.—With the constant and persistent insistence by the American Federation of Labor that the courts are not clothed with the authority of law to fine or imprison men for acts committed against the order of the courts, when those orders are not based upon statutory law, has made itself felt is evidenced by the fact that six bills have been introduced correcting this evil. All the bills referred to contemplate restricting the courts to punishment for contempt only when the contempt is committed in the actual presence of the court. Other so-called contempts, almost entirely confined to blanket injunctions issued by Judges in labor disputes, named indirect contempts, are to guarantee to the accused a jury trial

Ben Tillett of London has been endorsed by the executive committee of the Labor Party as one of the candidates who may be selected by a suitable constituency.

EIGHT-HOUR DAY

Bills Looking to the Establishment of General Eight-Hour Day on Government Work Introduced.

Washington, May 6.—Three bills have been introduced in Congress since the commencement of the present session, two in the House and one in the Senate. Senator Borah of Idaho is the author of the one in the upper house and Congressmen Hughes and Buchanan the ones in the lower house. These bills provide, in general terms, that all work performed now by the government shall be done in the eight-hour day, with the further provision that such work as can be executed by the government and let by contract to private contractors must also be confined to the eight-hour day in the fulfillment thereof.

REGULATE IMMIGRATION

Sentiments Expressed at Washington Meeting Against the Indiscriminate Admission of Aliens.

Washington, May 6.—"It is time for the United States to forsake the sentimental notion that this is the 'home of the oppressed' and begin the regulation of its immigration laws with some regard to the usefulness of its immigrants as producers rather than as consumers." This expression was used by Theodore Marburg of Baltimore, at a recent meeting of the American Society of International Law. "We owe much to the world, but a great deal to ourselves as well," he said. "We had a political test of our form of government in the civil war, but the social test is yet to come."

PLEA FOR MORALITY

Wife of the Governor of Iowa Addresses International Congress on Child Welfare.

Washington, May 6.—Arguments and efforts made and used by the trade unionists of the country found expression in the addresses made recently before the Child Welfare Congress in Washington. Among those who addressed the congress was Mrs. B. F. Carroll, wife of the governor of Iowa. The consensus of opinion was that the moral standards of this country were not as high as they should be, and that much could be done to improve them. These discussions rarely fail to bring out the fact that industrial conditions which compel children to find employment at an early age are followed by decreased moral standards and physical deficiency.

The House Committee on public buildings and grounds has commenced a vigorous investigation in the District of Columbia of the buildings occupied by the various departments of government. It has been discovered that many of the buildings are in such a state of neglect and so littered with boxes, paper and rubbish in halls and exits that difficulty would be experienced in case of fire of any great number of persons being able to escape. Recommendations will be immediately made to remedy this condition of affairs.

LLOYD GEORGE'S NEW BILL

Covers a Wide Area and Seeks State Aid in Procuring Humanitarian Methods for Workmen.

Washington, May 6.—Intense interest is evinced regarding the plans now being worked out in England by Mr. Lloyd George to establish a state insurance against sickness, disability and unemployment. Mr. George has given much time and consideration to this measure, and it is now about ready to present to the House of Commons. The Chancellor, it is stated in the English papers, has been amused by the protest against his plans by the members of the Social Democratic Federation, the great advocates of unlimited state action, against the entry of the state into this domain. The Chancellor says: "What an irony for Socialists to oppose state intervention."

ANOTHER SMASH

Associated Press Directors' Meeting Regaled by Herman Ridder in the Role of Union Petractor.

Washington, May 6.—At a meeting of the new board of directors of the Associated Press in New York recently several addresses were delivered, and among them one by Herman Ridder. Mr. Ridder took a vigorous fall out of the manufacturers of paper and the methods employed in its manufacture, and evidently his critical and peevish mood became intensified, for in the conclusion of his speech he delivered a phillipic against the trade unions, a fertile field for all captains of industry. In part, he declaimed: "The labor unions destroy incentive for efficient labor. They seem to be arrayed against promotion or the culling out of competents from incompetents. They bring every member to a dead level of efficiency. They are against bonuses." And so on ad infinitum. Strange indeed that labor unions are so reprehensible and yet weather the storm of so many fierce gales as just set in motion by Mr. Ridder.

"A CALL TO DUTY"

Miners of Nova Scotia, on Strike for Over Twenty Months, Still Loyal to Organization.

Washington, May 6.—A pamphlet has been issued and distributed in Great Britain explaining the situation in Nova Scotia. The coal miners of that country are urged to remain away from Springhill, N.S. The emigration office states there is no change, and that the strike has been on for over twenty months. The miners are fighting for the recognition of their union, for a wage scale agreement and for the payment of coal per ton instead of per box and for a fair docking system.

With the change in political complexion of the House of Representatives there comes a corresponding change in the personnel of the employes acting in various capacities, from committee clerks to janitors. Over 300 of these employes will be replaced during the coming two or three weeks.

BRITISH RAILWAY CLERKS

Low Wage Condition Becoming Unbearable Among Clerical Employees of Transportation Lines.

Washington, May 6.—Employees of railways in Great Britain, in clerical departments, are urging an increase in wage and bettered conditions.

In view of the fact that there are 77,000 men employed in railway offices, and also that there are 180,000 railway shareholders, and a large number of the general public interested in railway matters, the Railway Clerks' Association has issued some interesting facts and figures in a pamphlet, entitled "The Life of the Railway Clerk." It gives a brief description of the main conditions of employment in the offices of British Railway Companies, and a plea for a higher scale of wages for all grades of railway clerical workers. The salaries paid on some of the principal railways are quoted, and they work out at a very low rate indeed, ranging from \$5.25 to \$8.90 per week, the average being \$6.70.

The rate of pay of railway clerks, compared with that earned by Post Office Clerks, is much lower, and it is contended that with the higher cost of living the difficulties of a married railway clerk has greatly increased. A. G. Walkden, the General Secretary, says his association now contains over 150 branches and upwards of 12,000 members, and it has been instrumental in obtaining redress in the matter of unpaid Sunday duty from nearly all the principal railway companies. It will also be recollected that Mr. Goulding recently introduced a Bill into the House of Commons to secure for every clerk (and Station-master) employed by a railway company Sunday rest or a free and uninterrupted rest day of twenty-four hours in each week.

ENGLISH INJUNCTIVE PROCESS.

Operative Bleachers' Dyers' and Finishers' Union Restrained from Parliamentary Levy.

Washington, May 6.—News has just been received from across the Atlantic that another injunction against a Trade Union paying the Parliamentary levy has been enforced during the week. The case was heard at Manchester, and the plaintiff was W. E. Boardman, a foreman bleacher who, it was stated, had received an indemnity from the Trade Union Defense League. Vice-Chancellor Leigh Clare granted the injunction applied for against the Operative Bleachers', Dyers', and Finishers' Association, restraining them from imposing an annual levy of 6d. per member for Parliamentary and local labor representation, and he expressed the opinion that the indemnity of the plaintiff by the Trade Union Defense League was quite legitimate and legal. There may be an appeal against the inclusion of the local labor representation, as it is contended that this goes beyond the Osborne judgment.

RAPS TAYLOR SYSTEM

President O'Connell of the International Association of Machinists Exposes "Efficiency" Plan.

Washington, May 6.—In his argument before the Labor committee of the House President O'Connell of the Machinists bared the entire scheme of the advocates of the Taylor system, now being attempted to be installed at various works of the government. He said:

"It is the unfair employer, in conjunction with the lead pencil faddist, who is attempting to introduce such schemes and schisms with the view of making it appear that labor is being benefited and labor is going to get more money. That is a huge joke. The moment the laborer gets more money he has to go out and get it himself. No employer is going around handing money to laborers on a silver platter. Do not let anybody tell you that. The factories and workshops where the Taylor system and other systems aping it are in effect, there labor is absolutely helpless, absolutely shackled. They are dependent because individuality has been driven out of them absolutely by that system. Mr. Taylor says give us strong men, with big physical bodies, but take their heads off; we do not want men with heads; we want men with big hands, strong arms and strong bodies, but without heads. We will do the thinking for them. We do not want anybody around here who can think. We have a man who will do the thinking and tell them when to stop and when to start, and how much they must do, and if they do not do it then they go to the scrap pile."

SENATE LABOR COMMITTEE

Senators Finally Arrive at Agreement Over Personnel of the Several Standing Committees.

Washington, May 6.—The committee in the Senate to which all labor bills are referred is designated as the committee on "Education and Labor." During the last Congress, the sixty-first, the Senate Committee stubbornly refused to meet, although call after call was issued by its chairman, Senator Borah, and every member polled by the A. F. of L. Legislative Committee the day before and the morning of the meeting, but without avail. The personnel of the committee has been changed in this Congress, and hopes are entertained that more activity will be displayed when Chairman Borah calls the committee together. It would not be out of place, however, for trade union constituents of the members on this committee to call the attention of their senators to the importance of labor legislation in contemplation. The members of the committee are as follows:

Senators Borah of Idaho, Penrose of Pennsylvania, du Pont of Delaware, Page of New Hampshire, McLean of Connecticut, Kenyon of Iowa, Rayner of Maryland, Bankhead of Alabama, Shively of Indiana, Swanson of Virginia and Martine of New Jersey.

Practically all the churches observed Sunday, April 30, as "Tuberculosis Day" in Washington, D. C. All sermons preached treated in some manner the great work now being carried on to prevent the spread of this plague.